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TO RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO PRIORITY 7798
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RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA PRIORITY 2876
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 6408
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1879
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE PRIORITY 6109
RUEHPA/AMEMBASSY PRAIA PRIORITY 2128
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 3449
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 2528
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 1873
RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY 7959
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 6707
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 4038
RUEHUM/AMEMBASSY ULAANBAATAR PRIORITY 4934
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW PRIORITY 8348
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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [UNGA](#)

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE REQUEST: CONVEYING USG PRIORITIES FOR
THE PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES
MINISTERIAL

11. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraphs 5 -
116.

12. (U) This year's Community of Democracies (CD) Ministerial is scheduled for November 2007 in Bamako, Mali. Based upon a set of participation criteria, countries will be invited to the ministerial as full participants, as observers, or are not invited at all. The decision on which countries will be invited to the CD Ministerial is made by the CD Convening Group (CG), a coordinating body of 16 countries to which the United States is a member. The CG members are Cape Verde, Chile, Czech Republic, El Salvador, India, Italy, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, South Africa, and the United States.

13. (U) Over the past several months, the CG has met three times to deliberate on the list of invitees. The CG traditionally determines the invitees by consensus. The final meeting on the invitation process is slated for July 27th in Washington, although another meeting in early August is possible, after which CD chair Mali will extend the official invitations.

STATE OF PLAY

14. (SBU) Most USG priorities were achieved during the last CG meeting in June. However, we expect some countries will challenge the conclusions reached. At that meeting, Chile proposed that Venezuela be invited as a full participant while the U.S., the Czech Republic, and El Salvador opposed any invitation at all. The European group - represented by Poland, the Czech Republic, Italy, and Portugal - reversed their original position in favor of inviting Russia as a full participant and supported Russia as an observer to facilitate consensus. This group's change of heart prompted others including Mexico, Chile, Mongolia, India and South Africa to formally support Russian full participation. The Portuguese suggested that consideration of Egypt as an observer be placed on hold and joined with India in opposing Bangladeshi participation. Observing the rule of consensus, the Malian

chair placed Bangladesh and Venezuela in the 'not invited' column and Russia as observer. We expect that there will be further discussions on Bangladesh, Russia, Egypt, Singapore, Nigeria, and Venezuela. Moreover, the Department wishes to have Taiwan invited as a guest to the CD ministerial.

DEMARCHE OBJECTIVES FOR ALL POSTS

15. (SBU) All posts are requested to pursue the following two major objectives. Supporting points on Russia are in para 10. Points on Venezuela are in para 11. Supporting points on Nigeria are in para 13.

-- Urge host government, member of the Convening Group, to refrain from breaking the hard fought agreement and consensus reached in the June CD Convening Group meeting.

-- Urge host government, member of the Convening Group, to refrain from supporting full Participant status for Russia, Nigeria, and Venezuela for the November 2007 Bamako CD Ministerial.

ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR SAN SALVADOR, PRAGUE, and WARSAW

16. (SBU) Urge host governments to remain steadfast in support of vigorous CD invitation criteria. Ask that they participate at the level of Ambassador or higher in the July meeting. Express appreciation for their vocal support in the Convening Group meetings. Inviting Venezuela and Russia as full participants, amid growing threats to democracy in both

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countries, would signal indifference to legitimate concerns about democratic governance and respect for human rights and undermine the credibility of the Community of Democracies.

ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR LISBON

17. (SBU) Urge Portugal as a Convening Group member, to support observer status for Bangladesh.

-- Urge Portugal to support Egypt as an observer to the Ministerial meeting.

-- Inform Portugal that per their request the U.S. is ready to accept Guinea Bissau as an observer.

ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR NEW DELHI

18. (SBU) Urge India to support observer status for Bangladesh.

(if asked only) Singapore -- The International Advisory Committee for the Community of Democracies recommended not inviting Singapore either as participant or observer, a decision we agree with.

ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR BAMAKO, CAPE VERDE, and PRETORIA

19. (SBU) We understand that African countries are in a difficult position. We urge these countries to remain committed to maintaining the integrity of the invitation process.

-- If the invitation status holds, more African nations will attend the Ministerial meeting as both observers and participants than ever before. In particular, ten additional countries from Africa will participate as observers and countries that have never attended a CD Ministerial meeting will be present as an observer or participant. These include: Cameroon, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Rwanda, and Uganda. This will be an important accomplishment for Mali's tenure and for democracy on the continent.

RUSSIA AS OBSERVER: SUPPORTING POINTS

¶10. (SBU) Convey to host government, member of the Convening Group, the concern that Russian democracy continues to deteriorate, particularly in the areas of freedom of the press, assembly, unchecked executive power, and NGO harassment. Cite the following examples:

-- There has been continuing centralization of power in the executive branch with amendments to election laws and new legislation for political parties that grant Russian government broad powers to regulate, investigate, and close down parties.

-- For example in July 2006, President Putin signed into law legislation "On Countering Extremism," despite concerns that the law may restrict activities of political parties, the media, and NGOs and legitimate criticism of the government. Further amendments to law expanded circumstances under which a candidate may be removed from the ballot (including for vaguely-defined "extremist" behavior); and prohibited what is deemed to be "negative" campaigning in television ad spots.

-- U.S. human rights reports document that Russian authorities restrict freedom of movement and exhibit negative attitudes toward, and sometimes harass, NGOs involved in human rights monitoring. Also notable is the passage and entry into force of a new law on NGOs, which has already had some adverse effects on their operations.

-- U.S. human rights reports conclude that freedom of expression and media independence have declined due to restrictions and GOR pressure, as well as harassment and killings of at least 12 journalists. Investigative journalist

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Anna Politkovskaya was assassinated in October 2006. She was highly critical of the government's policy toward Chechnya and uncovered various human rights abuses there. No suspects have been arrested.

-- Freedom of assembly has been violently repressed for opposition demonstrations. The U.S. State Department and the EU publicly protested the recent police brutality employed to break up opposition marches in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, and Voronezh over the past months. Russian authorities sought to prevent the marches from taking place at all: they denied permission to stage the events or tried to marginalize them by changing their venues. They also harassed and detained Russians traveling to participate in these peaceful rallies; on the day of the events, a disproportionate police presence wielded undue force against the protesters as well as journalists reporting on the events. At the EU-Russia Summit May 18, similar efforts were directed against members of the Russian opposition seeking to express their opinions in Samara. Although some subsequent marches have been allowed to go forward peacefully, the events are troubling.

VENEZUELA NOT INVITED: SUPPORTING POINTS

¶11. (SBU) Convey to host government, member of the Convening Group, the significant deterioration of Venezuelan democracy, particularly in the areas of freedom of the press, assembly, unchecked executive power, and NGO harassment. Post should note that unlike the current Russian political system, Venezuela has a history of democracy going back to the 1950's that makes its slide into authoritarianism more worrisome. Examples to cite include:

-- President Chavez's centralization of vast powers in the executive. In January, the Chavez-controlled National Assembly approved an 'Enabling Law' to allow Chavez to rule by decree in a number of areas for the eighteen months.

Chavez controls the entire National Assembly and virtually all other government institutions, including the judiciary, the electoral council, and the attorney general's office.

-- In recent months, the GOV has accelerated its efforts to dominate main media channels. In late May, the GOV denied renewal of the broadcast license for Radio Caracas Television (RCTV), Venezuela's leading and oldest and most widely viewed independent television station for having a critical editorial line. This decision was carried out despite its widespread unpopularity, universal international condemnation and widespread demonstrations in the country. Following the closure of RCTV, President Chavez announced that Globovision, the only network that continues to have an independent editorial line, would be next.

-- U.S. human rights reports documented widespread arbitrary detention and torture of suspects, as well as extrajudicial killings by the often-corrupt military and the police.

-- Judicial independence has been severely eroded in Venezuela under Chavez. International human rights monitors report that political influence, particularly from the Attorney General's Office is common, which in turn is pressured by the executive branch. Civil courts are also subjected to strong executive influence.

-- In their reports, international observers noted use of public resources for partisan and campaign purposes in December 2006 re-election of President Chavez. Two million public-sector workers received their holiday bonuses over a month early, which bolstered popular support before the election. Media and other reports noted systematic GOV intimidation of public employees. Energy Minister and PDVSA President Rafael Ramirez announced that workers at PDVSA, the state oil company, 'had to campaign in favor of the president.'

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-- The Venezuelan government has developed additional mechanisms for control such as the infamous governmental list of 'Tascon' used to identify and punish opponents to the Chavez regime. The Tascon List includes the names and identification numbers of all persons who signed petitions to recall President Chavez.

-- La Lista de Tascon, in combination with lists of members of social missions and Venezuelan voting records, constitute El Programa Maisanta. The government program not only identifies the political orientation of individuals but also attempts to characterize the degree of their revolutionary dedication.

-- The GOV is using the judiciary to persecute political opponents, journalists, and independent NGOs. Targets include the leaders of the civic NGO Sumate, the opposition mayor of two Caracas suburbs, and opposition governor and former presidential candidate Manuel Rosales.

-- The National Assembly is considering (and almost certain to pass) legislation restricting the ability of NGOs to receive foreign assistance.

-- GOV officials (and President Chavez, in particular) routinely insult and verbally attack, the Catholic Church and Church leaders.

ONLY FOR SANTIAGO

112. As the previous host of the CD we would expect you to uphold the criteria of the CD. We hope you will not continue to insist on Venezuela and Russia's full participant status.

NIGERIA AS OBSERVER

¶13. (SBU) Convey to host governments that the U.S. opposes Nigeria's full participation.

-- The recent elections of April 14 and 21 were seriously flawed and a great disappointment. There were credible reports of malfeasance, such as vote rigging, ballot box stuffing, and non-transparent counting. The scope and scale of reported problems with the polling have exposed serious weaknesses in the electoral system and now pose risks to the country's fragile democracy. The IAC notes that widespread irregularities and fraud were consistently reported to have characterized the conduct and management of the elections, as well as the lead-up to the elections.

-- We support Nigeria's participation as an observer in view of the democratic progress they have made since 1999 especially with respect to civil and political rights and we are engaged in a dialogue with the Nigerians urging them to restore democratic institutions.

TAIWAN AS A 'SPECIAL GUEST'

¶14. (SBU) Convey to host government, member of the Convening Group our belief that Taiwan should be invited as a 'guest' to the CD Ministerial meeting in November. In our view it is essential to recognize the admirable successful transition Taiwan has undergone to a fully-fledged democracy. By inviting Taiwan as a guest, the CD can recognize this major achievement.

-- Our support for guest status for Taiwan in no way changes our one-China policy that recognizes the Peoples Republic of China as the sole legal government of China.

-- Inviting Taiwan as a 'guest' to an international event would not set a precedent for future or similar events because Taiwan is already extensively involved in a variety of organizations and processes (e.g. APEC and WTO) for which statehood is not a prerequisite, through diverse arrangements and under different names.

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ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVE ON TAIWAN FOR PRAGUE AND SAN SALVADOR

¶15. (SBU) Ask host governments to formally commit to a joint proposal to invite Taiwan as a special guest to the Bamako Ministerial meeting.

REPORTING DEADLINE

¶16. (U) Posts should report results by cable to G - Joaquin Ferrao, DRL/MLGA - Lynn Sicade, and IO/RHS - Rachel Leatham on or before July 23.

BACKGROUND

¶17. (U) The Community of Democracies includes over 120 countries with (nascent or developed) democratic governments that are committed to promoting democracy around the world and to sharing their unique experiences and lessons learned with others. The U.S. has been an active supporter of CD because we view it as a unique forum where democracies can act together to address issues of democracy and human rights. More information about the Community can be found at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/c10790.htm>.

¶18. (U) The Criteria for Participation and Procedures set out the basis upon which countries are to be judged for Observer or Participant status. The Criteria for Participation and Procedures are available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/26085.htm>.

¶19. (U) Although the selection is made by CG participants, it is informed by the non-governmental International Advisory Committee (IAC), organized by several NGOs affiliated with the CD process. The IAC issued recommendations to the CG on which countries to invite to the ministerial based on an agreed upon criteria. The recommendations are not binding on CG members.

POINT OF CONTACT

¶20. (U) Please contact G staff Joaquin Ferrao at 202-647-4096 or via email for any further background information or argumentation to meet our objectives.
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